

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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O R 152327Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE
INFO HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 153093

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PEPR, MASS, PBOR, ET, SO, US

SUBJECT: MENGISTU THREAT TO BREAK RELATIONS

REF: A) ADDIS ABABA 2644; B) ADDIS ABABA 2631

1. FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED JUNE 15 BUT NOT USED
AT NOON BRIEFING:

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE ETHIOPIAN WARNING,
MADE BY CHAIRMAN MENGISTU, THAT THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT
WOULD BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE US IF WE SUPPLIED
DEFENSIVE ARMS TO SOMALIA?

A: WE HAVE DISCUSSED WITH THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT THEIR
CONCERN REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF THE US PROVIDING
LIMITED DEFENSIVE ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA. WE HAVE ADVISED
THEM OF OUR EFFORTS TO SECURE ASSURANCES FROM SOMALIA THAT
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IT WILL RESPECT THE TERRITORY OF ITS NEIGHBORS AND TO SATIS-
FY OURSELVES THAT SOMALIA IS PREPARED TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH
ITS NEIGHBORS BEFORE THE US WILL SUPPLY EVEN LIMITED DE-
FENSIVE ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA. OUR EFFORTS, FAR FROM BEING
HOSTILE TOWARD ETHIOPIA, ARE DESIGNED TO CONTRIBUTE TO
PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE AREA.

2. EMBASSY SHOULD DELIVER COPY ABOVE PRESS GUIDANCE
SOONEST TO MOFA AND MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- USG OFFICIALS DISCUSSED POSSIBLE US-SOMALIA RELATIONSHIP TWICE WITH FONMIN FELEKE IN NEW YORK. WE ARE DISAPPOINTED THAT PMGSE CHAIRMAN IS BEING MISLED ABOUT BOTH THE STATUS OF THE US-SOMALI ARMS RELATIONSHIP AND OUR POSITION ON THIS QUESTION;

-- AS DISCUSSED WITH FELEKE, USG HAS RECEIVED WRITTEN ASSURANCES FROM GSDR THAT SOMALIA WILL NOT USE FORCE AGAINST ITS NEIGHBORS AND WILL USE ARMS IT ACQUIRES ONLY FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND LEGITIMATE DEFENSE OF INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED TERRITORY OF THE SDR. WE ARE CONTINUING TO MONITOR THIS SITUATION CAREFULLY TO SATISFY OURSELVES THAT SOMALIA IS NOW PREPARED TO LIVE AT PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS.

-- WE CATEGORICALLY DENY ANY ALLEGATION THAT "SITUATION DEMONSTRATES THAT US PEOPLE AND USG WANT TO BECOME ETHIOPIA'S ENEMIES" OR THAT THE US IS SUPPORTING INSURGENCY IN THE OGADEN. TO THE CONTRARY, OUR EFFORTS ARE DESIGNED TO CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE HORN AND ARE THUS CONTRIBUTING TO ETHIOPIAN SECURITY. CHRISTOPHER

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